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AUTHOR Root, Paul; Kennedy, Rob
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ABSTRACT

The low number of blacks either enrolling in teacher education programs or available for teaching positions has been documented in numerous studies. However, not only do black college students not choose education as often as other professions, but black high school students do not choose to attend college as readily as members of other minority groups. Should these trends continue, minority group teachers may represent as little as five percent of the national teaching force by the turn of the century. Black teachers are needed to serve as role models, to teach cultural diversity, and to supplement the projected general teacher shortage. Various strategies have been suggested to encourage blacks and other minorities to enter the teaching profession. Those that involve increased salaries, raised status for classroom teachers, teacher empowerment, and reform of teacher education programs are not likely to be implemented. Strategies that focus on minority-specific recruitment, two-year and four-year college partnerships, and alternative certification procedures are more likely to be implemented. A list of 33 references is appended. (Author/FMW)

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Paul Root, Graduate Dean
and Chair, Department of Education
Ouachita Baptist University
Box 3753, 410 Ouachita
Arkadelphia, AR 71923
(501)246-4531

and

Rob Kennedy, Assistant Director
Center for Academic Excellence
University of Central Arkansas
Box G, THD 205
Conway, AR 72032-5099
(501)450-3400

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Black Teacher Recruitment

Paul Root
Ouachita Baptist University
Rob Kennedy
University of Central Arkansas

Running head: BLACK TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Abstract

The low number of blacks either enrolling in teacher-education programs or available for teaching positions has been documented in numerous studies. However, the problem is greater than the fact that black students do not choose the profession of education as often as other areas. Black students do not choose to attend college as readily as other ethnic groups. It has been suggested that the number of minority teachers, in general, in the national teaching force could be as little as five percent by the turn of the century.

A number of reasons have been suggested as to why minority teachers, blacks in particular, are needed, including serving as role models, to teach cultural diversity, and because of an expected shortage of teachers in general. A number of strategies have been developed to encourage blacks or other minorities to enter the teaching profession or otherwise become a part of it. Among these approaches are increased salaries, raised status of classroom teachers, teacher empowerment, and changes in university programs, all strategies unlikely to occur. Suggestions more likely to occur are minority-specific recruiting strategies, two-year and four-year college partnerships, and various alternative certification procedures.

Black Teacher Recruitment

Introduction

Enrollments in teacher-education programs made a sixty-one percent upswing between 1985 and 1989, according to a national survey by Gary Galluzzo of Western Kentucky University and Mary Dilworth of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Enrollment in Teaching Programs on the Rise, 1990). A recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article (Evangelauf, 1990) tended to support this finding in reporting that the U.S. Department of Education found that college enrollments in general hit record highs in 1988. The enrollment increases between 1978 and 1988 were shared by all racial groups, but minority gains were mostly from Hispanics and Asians. Blacks showed the smallest increase.

The low numbers of blacks either enrolling in college in general or in teacher-education programs in particular has been documented in numerous studies (e.g., Graham, 1987; Holmes, 1989; Mathis, 1988; Olson, 1988a,b; Reed, 1986; Rodman, 1988a,b). The trend has also been strong in Arkansas. Since 1979, according to figures provided by the Department of Higher Education (Goff, 1989, 1990), the number of black teacher-education graduates declined from 268 of 1454 (18 percent) to 79 of 1313 (6 percent) in 1988 in the state universities. In the private colleges and universities, the figures were 24 of 316 (8 percent) in 1981 down to 18 of 154 (12 percent) in 1987. Even though the percentage is somewhat larger, the absolute number of black graduates was down. The latest figures (1989) for both types of institutions show an increase, at least in numbers, however: 88 of 1334 (7 percent) and 30 of 319 (9 percent), respectively. Although a single upturn is insufficient information to suggest a new trend, the figures are encouraging.

In 1983-84, the number and percentage of blacks enrolled in Arkansas public schools was 102,555, or 23.7 percent; the number and percentage of

seniors was 6,627, or 22.9 percent; but the number and percentage who graduated was 6,337, or 22.7 percent (Arkansas Department of Education, 1983). Four years later, of those who received diplomas from Arkansas public universities, the percentage of blacks was 10.5 percent, which represented 594 graduates, or 9.0 percent of the size of the class of 1983 seniors (Arkansas Department of Higher Education, 1989). The percentage who received specifically teacher-education degrees was 6.0 percent which represented 79 graduates, or 1.1 percent of the size of the 1983 senior class (Arkansas Department of Higher Education, 1989). The percentage of minority enrollment in the public schools of Arkansas in 1988-89 was 24.1 percent of the total enrollment (Merrill, 1990). The percentage of minorities among high school graduates then was 20.4 percent (Merrill, 1990). That is, percentagewise, there are now more blacks enrolled in public schools, but even fewer graduating, than there were several years ago. If the trend through college graduation is no worse than it was then, it can be expected that even less than six percent will earn teacher-education degrees in the next few years.

The decline has even been felt in a traditionally black institution. The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) is the only state institution of higher education in Arkansas that is predominantly black. UAPB has traditionally been a strong teacher-education institution, preparing most of the black teachers in Arkansas. In 1979 UAPB graduated 149 black teacher-education students. In 1989 that number was 25. To the credit of UAPB, in terms of change, in 1989 they graduated 22 white student teachers, up from 17 in 1979 (Moten, 1989; Goff, 1990).

The situation is far from unique: In a September, 1988, article, New York State was described as having a percentage of minority students three times greater than the representation of minority teachers (New York State Education Department). Haberman stated in a summer, 1988, article that in

most major universities, the number of students enrolled in teacher education was less than five percent black. In a fall, 1987, nationwide survey, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education found that only 5.3 percent of undergraduates enrolled in elementary education programs were black (Olson, 1988a). Those in secondary training amounted to 6.3 percent. Individual state data from the survey revealed that in Michigan black public school enrollment was 31 percent. Postsecondary enrollment was nine percent and enrollment in teacher-education programs was two percent. In Ohio, in 1986-87, 14 percent of the students were black while only six percent of the teachers were black (Loehr, 1988).

Clearly, blacks have shown a less than enthusiastic interest in the teaching profession as a career (Olson, 1988a). However, the problem is greater than the fact that black students do not choose the profession of education as often as other areas. Black students do not choose to attend college as readily as other ethnic groups (Evangelauf, 1990; Graham, 1987). In Arkansas, approximately 45 percent of high school graduates enroll in college. Of minority graduates, that percentage is 35 (Moten, 1989). The rates at which black students, nationally, have enrolled in college went from 27.8 percent in 1986 to 31.7 percent a year later, back down to 25 percent in 1988 (Magner, 1990b). In addition, blacks were found to have the worst college completion rates over a six-year period when compared with whites, Hispanics, and native Americans (Wilson, 1990).

Reasons for the Low Number

There are many reasons offered for the low number of blacks either pursuing teaching as a career or remaining in the profession. Some researchers have claimed that higher standards for entry into teacher-education programs, tests for certification, and sanctions against programs having too many students with low test scores all limit the number of students entering and exiting these programs (Graham, 1987;

Holmes, 1989; Spellman, 1988). For example, in 1988, blacks scored the lowest of all groups, including American Indian, Asian, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, other Hispanic, and white, on both the SAT verbal and mathematical sections (College Board, 1989). They also scored lowest in all areas of the ACT for the same year (American College Testing Program, 1989). Satisfactory scores on one or the other of the tests are used by many universities as part of their entrance requirements.

Smith (1988) claimed that almost 38,000 potential teachers, including over 21,000 blacks, were excluded from the profession due to failure to pass competency tests, although that figure and the methodology used in determining it were questioned by the president of the Educational Testing Service, publisher of the most widely used teacher test, the National Teachers Examination (Olson, 1988b).

Donnelly (1988) stated that the low number of blacks reflected cuts in federal financial aid programs, inadequate high school counseling, and a lack of systematic college recruitment programs. Other researchers have stated that most blacks choose careers other than education, including business, engineering, and social science (Haberman, 1988; Spellman, 1988). Graham (1987) suggested that blacks no longer feel constrained to seek teaching jobs. Johnson (1986) noted low salaries, working conditions, and lack of status as well as other opportunities. Garibaldi (1986) listed several factors, including a preference for higher salaries and more prestige, a lack of either public or parental support for showing an interest in teaching, and competency testing. Spellman (1988) cited research suggesting that the number of minority teachers in the national teaching force could be as little as five percent by the year 2000.

Need for Black Teachers

A number of reasons have been suggested as to why black or other minority teachers are needed. One of the most-often noted reasons is that

they serve as role models (e.g., Holmes, 1989; Loehr, 1988; Middleton, Mason, Stilwell, & Parker, 1988; Spellman, 1988). Also, as the proportion of minority teachers declines, the perceived importance of academic achievement to minority students may also decline (Loehr, 1988). The consequences of the entire academic enterprise appearing as better suited for whites are more dropouts, higher unemployment, more welfare, higher crime rates, and fewer qualified workers (Loehr, 1988).

Other researchers (Gentry & Wen, 1988; Holmes, 1989) have joined the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (Donnelly, 1988) in claiming that all students should be exposed to a variety of cultural perspectives. The interaction of non-minority students with minority teachers can increase the non-minority students' familiarity with minorities and raise their expectations of minority group members (Middleton, et al., 1988). Another reason is the shortage of teachers, in general, due to retirement and other natural attrition (Loehr, 1988; Middleton, et al., 1988).

Possible Strategies or Solutions

A number of strategies have been developed to encourage blacks or other minorities to enter the teaching profession or otherwise become a part of it. Haberman (1988) listed increased salaries, raised status of classroom teachers, teacher empowerment, and changes in university programs as strategies unlikely to occur. In the short run, there were other suggestions: minority-specific recruiting strategies, two-year and four-year college partnerships, and various alternative certification procedures.

The strategies outlined in this paper will be categorized as academic, perceptual, or economic. The Quality Education for Minorities Project, sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation, is an example of an academic strategy (Magner, 1990a). The project calls for restructuring schools for

more flexibility for teachers and principals, monitoring minority student academic performance to insure later success, recruiting more minority teachers, and providing enrichment experiences to supplement minority schooling. Holmes (1989) suggested faculty and student exchanges between predominantly black and white institutions. Spellman (1988) supported recruitment programs as well as increased ties with community colleges; coordinating skills needed with the appropriate courses; and mentoring programs.

Spellman (1988) cited programs at Grambling University in Louisiana and Norfolk State University in Virginia where restructuring and intervention strategies seem to be used successfully. The Grambling teacher training program involved higher admissions standards, diagnostic testing and remediation, faculty inservice training, and test-taking seminars. Over a five-year period, the percentage of students passing rose from five percent to 85 percent. Enrollments increased over fourfold. Tutorials and workshops on test taking and basic skills led to improvement on the NTE Communications Skills test from 28 percent to 71 percent in a three-year period at Norfolk State.

Spellman (1988) described other intervention programs: The University of California initiated the Partnership Program which started intervention in the seventh grade, including advising, role models, campus visitation, printed information, and meetings with parents. The students were found to be more likely to enroll in college-preparatory courses than their peers. The Illinois Institute of Technology operated an intervention program during students' last three years of high school to prepare students for science and engineering programs. In 1987, IIT graduated more minority students in engineering than any other college in the country.

An approach implemented by the Clarke County School District in Georgia is an example of a perceptual strategy (Rodman, 1988b). The district paid for deans and education professors from predominantly black institutions to visit for several days. Later, the district paid for their top black students to visit and added a reception by the mayor and other civic leaders. The strategy was successful in that half of the students signed contracts with the district.

Reed (1986) described a three-part effort of Virginia Commonwealth University. The project first targeted community college minority students rather than high school students. The second element was a five-year teacher education program which required a major in the liberal arts as well as a major in education. The third component was a mentoring system involving university faculty and the targeted students.

Strategies involving financial incentives have become almost commonplace. Numerous recruiters and researchers have called for more money--in terms of higher pay for teachers; for scholarships, grants, work-study, and loans; and for recruiting (e.g., Graham, 1987; Holmes, 1989; Kortokrax-Clark, 1987; Loehr, 1988; Mathis, 1988; Rodman, 1988a). Rodman (1988b) described several approaches used by school districts around the country: Wake County Public School District in Raleigh, North Carolina, paid $1000 to $2000 bonuses for job candidates who met "specific qualifying criteria". The district also awarded college scholarships to students who agreed to study education. The Sarasota County School District in Florida paid two prospective black teachers all expenses plus substitute teacher wages to visit for a week. Both candidates signed contracts with the district. In the Caddo Parish school system in Shreveport, Louisiana, student teachers from Grambling State University, a predominantly black school, were provided rent-free apartments while they interned. On the other hand, the associate superintendent for personnel

for the Fresno, California, Unified School District, said that there were too few minority-teacher candidates to make special incentives worthwhile. He suggested that the approach would have auction-like effects. Instead, the Fresno district hired a consulting firm specializing in teacher recruitment to locate black teachers.

Oregon began offering tuition-waivers for minority students who would attend state colleges and universities (Donnelly, 1988). New York State implemented a number of programs, including the Stay in School Partnership Program, the Empire State Challenger Undergraduate Scholarships for Teachers Program, the Minority Recruitment Program, and the Teacher Opportunity Corps, all designed to increase the number of minorities available to teach (New York State Education Department, 1988).

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education recommended several programs to recruit minorities into teaching: national and state scholarship programs, high school and college work-study programs, two-year/four-year articulation programs, assistantships and grants programs, entry incentive programs, support programs for reentry and career change, teacher induction programs, and assessment demonstration grants programs (AACTE, 1987).

The Arkansas legislature, at the urging of Governor Bill Clinton, recently (1989 regular session) placed additional funds in state scholarships to be awarded based on need. The Governor has signed into law a program to fund the education of prospective minority teachers.

There are several statewide groups working to find ways to increase the number of minority students going to college and also to increase the number of minority students who will consider education as a profession. The recent increase in enrollments in Arkansas teacher education programs may signal the success of their efforts.

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